

Executive Summary

CPS HR Consulting administered the City of Fargo Employee Engagement Survey online from Aug. 18 through Sept. 5, 2025. In total, 68% (711) of employees responded to the survey. Department and divisions were tracked for accurate reports. Responses were anonymous.

The survey included: 81 questions in 11 categories, 4 demographic questions, 2 questions asking if the employee plans to stay or leave in the next year and their reason why, and 3 open-ended questions.

Questions and categories included in the survey are based on decades of research on employee engagement, and national public sector employee surveys (U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia). The questions and categories included in the survey aim to explore the factors that contribute to engagement.

Engagement

CPS HR designates 6 questions out of the 81 questions as an index to calculate and measure engagement. Engagement is defined by CPS HR as the connection between the employee and their organization. Engagement goes beyond job satisfaction. Engaged employees are proud to work for their organization, recommend it as a good place to work, and are deeply committed to its success.

Based on the responses to the six index questions, we calculated a mean engagement score (between 1 and 5) for each employee. We then calculated the percentage of employees at each engagement level: fully engaged (mean score above 4), somewhat engaged (mean score between 3 and 4), or not engaged (mean score of 3 or below).

- 18% of City employees are “fully engaged,” 51% are “somewhat engaged” and 31% are “not engaged.”
- The overall percentage of fully engaged employees in the City (18%) is below CPS HR’s national benchmarks¹ for private sector (46%), the government sector overall (40%) and local government² (35%).

Drivers of Engagement

To determine the “drivers” of engagement, CPS HR uses a combination of “weights” through a statistical analysis³ of the City’s results, and the percentage of positive scores (percentage of agree or strongly agree).

The “key drivers” of engagement are the questions that, if maintained or improved, are likely to have the greatest impact on employee engagement.

Key Drivers of Engagement – Questions – Areas to Maintain

The following questions have a relatively high weight (strong relationship with engagement) and a high score based on survey responses (above 65% positive):

- “I feel valued for the work I do” (Department Culture) - 67% agree or strongly agree
- “My department respects individual differences (e.g., cultures, working styles, backgrounds, ideas)” - 75% agree or strongly agree

¹ CPS HR’s benchmarks are from a national poll designed to represent employees in the private sector, government sector, and each level of government (federal, state, and local) in a wide variety of industries. The most recent biennial poll was conducted in November 2023.

² CPS HR’s local government benchmark includes employees from across the U.S. in municipal government (cities/counties) and special districts (such as water and fire districts). Employees in this benchmark hold a range of occupations (e.g., public administration, public health, social services, courts, transportation, corrections).

³ CPS HR used a type of regression analysis called relative weights or relative importance analysis.

- “I am satisfied with my Work Schedule Flexibility” - 73% agree or strongly agree
- “I have the resources I need to do my job well” - 74% agree or strongly agree
- “My workload is reasonable” - 67% agree or strongly agree
- “I feel I can make a difference by working here” - 84% agree or strongly agree
- “My department is successful at accomplishing its mission” - 80% agree or strongly agree
- “My department's mission is important to me” - 89% agree or strongly agree

Key Drivers of Engagement – Questions – Areas for Improvement

The following questions have a high weight (strong relationship with engagement), yet a relatively low score based on survey responses (below 65% positive):

- “I feel that the City as a whole is managed well” - 26% agree or strongly agree
- “City leaders create a positive workplace culture” - 21% agree or strongly agree
- “I believe City leaders care about employee well-being” - 33% agree or strongly agree
- “Compared to people doing a similar job in other organizations, I feel my pay is reasonable” - 36% agree or strongly agree
- “I feel that my pay adequately reflects my performance” - 35% agree or strongly agree

CPS HR Recommendations

- Share and discuss survey results with employees, leaders, and key stakeholders.
- Review CPS HR’s action plan recommendations report for potential actions for top key driver questions.
- Choose one or two City-wide priorities to act upon.
- Review the department results reports for any major differences compared to the City overall.
- Set expectations and due dates for leaders to act upon the results.
- Provide support to leaders to take action on results. Different levels of guidance and resources may be needed depending on the circumstances.
- Consider conducting employee feedback sessions or focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of opportunities for improvement and/or to prioritize actions.
- Communicate any actions taken as a result of the survey multiple times across a number of different avenues (e.g., all-staff meetings, internal websites, emails, posters).
- Adopt a schedule to measure and monitor progress on employee engagement initiatives.

Submitted by: Project Lead, Janelle Callahan, jcallahan@cpsshr.us and

Senior Project Consultant, Judy England Joseph jenglandjoseph@cpsshr.us
